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## *House of Representatives*

### **A TRIBUTE TO RIMBAN GEORGE T. MATSUBAYASHI ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE BUDDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA AFTER NEARLY 50 YEARS OF SERVICE**

Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rimban George T. Matsubayashi. After almost 50 years of serving as a minister for the Buddhist Churches of America, including more than nine years as head priest of the Los Angeles Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Downtown Los Angeles in the 34th District, Reverend Matsubayashi will retire on January 31, 2009.

Rev. Matsubayashi, who is also fondly known as Rev. George or Matsubayashi-sensei, graduated Summa Cum Laude from Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Japan in 1960. Later that year, he began his ministerial service in the Jodo Shinshu tradition of Buddhism in the United States at the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii at the Honolulu Betsuin Buddhist Temple. While in Hawaii, Rev. George studied at the English Language Institute at the University of Hawaii. In 1963, he enrolled in the doctoral studies program at the University of Wisconsin. In 1964, he transferred to the PhD program in the Department of Oriental Languages at the University of California, Los Angeles.

In 1965, Matsubayashi-sensei was appointed to the Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles. When the temple became independent in 1976, Rev. George served as its first resident minister. He remained there until 1999. During his 34 years at Venice Hongwanji, Rev. George was active in a wide variety of community organizations. He served on the board of United Way's Western Region. He was a member of the Clergy Council for the Pacific Division of the Los Angeles Police Department. He also gave his time as a Reserve Chaplain for LAPD's Central and Pacific divisions.

In 1999, Rev. George was appointed as the Rimban, or head priest, of the Los Angeles Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, which is also referred to as "Nishi" to the local Japanese American community. During his tenure, Rev. George oversaw the 100th Anniversary of the temple in 2005. The event featured the addition of the new Wisteria Chapel and the Muryo Koju-do (nokotsudo-columbarium) built to commemorate the temple's pioneering members and to continue the proud legacy of the Issei – first generation Japanese Americans – for future generations.

Since joining the Los Angeles Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, Rev. George's community involvement extended well beyond the church's walls. He serves on the Little Tokyo Coordinating Council, the Los Angeles Buddhist Federation and as a volunteer chaplain at several hospitals on the west side of Los Angeles.

In addition to his spiritual and community work, Rev. George is also a devoted husband, father and grandfather. Rev. George and his wife, Kiyoko "Kay" Matsubayashi, have four children: Craig and his wife, Raquel; Dean and his wife, Kim; Tina and her husband, Howard; and Erik and his wife, Cindy. They are also the proud grandparents of Jared, Lindsay, Chase and Emma.

Madam Speaker, on the occasion of Rev. George's retirement, I ask my congressional colleagues to please join his dutiful congregation, his family and me in thanking him for his many years of service to the Buddhist Churches of America and our community. While we wish him well in this new phase of his life, Rev. George will always be Sensei, or teacher, in the hearts and minds of the generations of families whom he has touched during his many years of ministerial service.

